4.17.7 Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice

Under the No Action Alternative, the current strain on electric power supply and distribution would continue, which could result in power supply shortfalls and disruptions as additional demands for power are made to support future development. These supply and distribution difficulties could decrease the efficiency of business operations in the study area and have an adverse effect on the overall economy. Other related spending in local markets would continue as beneficial economic effects.

4.17.8 Visual Resources

Past, existing, and future development have and would continue to visually alter the landscape. Negative effects to the visual quality of the area from development include existing utility lines and associated cleared ROWs, commercial development, major roads, abandoned buildings, industrial land uses, aggregate mining, and sand and gravel pits. Where the alternative would be located near one of these existing negative visual features, the impacts would result in an additive adverse effect to the existing visual impacts. However, locating the proposed transmission line adjacent to an existing utility corridor would typically be preferable to locating the line in a previously undisturbed landscape. The additive cumulative impacts for any alternative would not be significant.

4.17.9 Water Resources

Growth and development in the Sacramento area would increase water demand. Construction activities projected for the Proposed Action and alternatives would cause slight increases in surface-water sediment load and water use. These effects would be transitory. Incremental increases in surface-water sediment load from maintenance would not result in significant cumulative impacts.

4.18 UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

Unavoidable adverse impacts are defined as those impacts that could not be reduced to less than significant levels through EPMs (Table 3-4), other mitigation measures, or using another alternative. Short-term significant unavoidable impacts for air emissions (PM_{10}, VOCs, and NO_x) would occur for the Proposed Action and alternatives.

4.19 SHORT-TERM USES VERSUS LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

During the 50- to 60-year life of the transmission line, the construction phase for the Proposed Action would cause the most ground disturbance, with 581 acres of temporary disturbance to the physical environment. Impacts would include approximately 414.5 acres of new ROW, 76 acres for transmission structure installation, 50.9 acres for access roads, 19.6 acres for pulling sites and approximately 20 acres for material storage areas.

After construction, the majority of disturbed areas, including new ROW, pulling sites, material storage areas, and structure sites, would be reclaimed to preconstruction use. Permanent land dedicated to the facilities, resulting in about 66 acres, would experience long-term disturbance for the transmission structures and access roads.

Potential adverse effects to air quality would be short term, mainly localized, and result from construction. These short-term impacts would exceed regulatory thresholds for PM_{10}, VOC, and NO_x emissions. Short-term and long-term impacts to soils and water quality would occur. Accelerated soil erosion would occur, particularly on steep slopes, from construction. Water quality impacts would be limited and short term.

Potential effects to biological resources, including sensitive plant species, sensitive habitats, and wildlife, primarily would be long term due to the permanent removal of vegetation and other wildlife species habitat. Habitat recovery in areas of temporary disturbance would vary according to the vegetation type and the presence or absence of special-status rare plant species.

Impacts to historical resources, related to additive adverse visual effects, would be for the life of the project, if facilities were removed when no longer needed. Similarly, direct physical impacts to Native American sites and paleontological resources are considered long term (permanent) and nonrenewable.

Potential land use effects would be largely short term and result from construction noise, dust, and equipment operations. Short-term impacts would occur primarily to recreational uses. Agricultural practices could continue on most of the ROWs, except where structures are proposed. Overall, transmission line corridor productivity would remain similar to existing conditions. Land uses would not change, except where access road spurs and structures would be located.

Visual effects would be both short term and long term. Long-term additive impacts would result from the presence of the new transmission lines. Visual impacts would be somewhat increased during construction due to the presence of equipment and related fugitive dust. Noise and transportation effects would be short term and would result from construction activities.

4.20 IRREVERSIBLE/IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

Resources committed to the proposed project would be material and nonmaterial, including financial resources. Irreversible commitment of resources means that those resources, once committed to the project, would continue to be committed throughout the 50- to 60-year life of the Proposed Action and alternatives. Irretrievable commitment of resources means that resources used, consumed,